1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

REBEL DESTINY

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"Tell me this," said Granman Yankuso to us one evening when we sat alone with him in the council house, "why is it that things have changed so in the city? I am not a young man. For years I came to the city, and when I met Negro women of the town going to market or coming from market, they were dressed in full skirts. They looked well. Now the women dress in straight dresses like men. Straight up and down and short. They want to look like white people.

"Years ago when I came to the city, I used to hear Negroes laugh. It is good to hear laughter. Now they are trying to be like the whites. They do not laugh. That is not good. It would be better if white people laughed more, too.

"Why do Negroes want to turn into white people? Look, is my skin like yours? Is my daughter's hair like yours, white woman? If you put on a pangi, you will not look like my daughter. You, white man, are as tall as Captain And'u. If you put on a cloth over one shoulder, you will not look like And'u. . . .

"A man came to me in the city and said he wanted to go to Dahomey. He wore no obias. He was a white man's Negro. I said he couldn't go to Dahomey. The man said, 'Look, my skin is as black as yours.' 'Ai, but your heart isn't.'

"You know why I said it? There is your kind of magic, white man, and there is our kind of magic. White man's magic keeps men in cities, but here in the bush a man needs black man's magic to keep alive and black man's strength to go up and down the rivers.

"You white men have books. You read in books, and you know. I cannot read what men write, yet I can read in my own way. I meet a man, and I can read him. I look at him, and I know what he is thinking. Before he begins to talk, I know what he wants to say. What your ancestors knew they put down in books, and you read it. What our ancestors know, they tell us at night, they tell us in the cool of the

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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morning, they tell us when we call on them. That is the black man's way.

"You white people have money, you have fine houses, you wear clothes, you can count. They tell me that you say in your books all people must be friends. But you have wars. If white people kill white people, then *mati*—friend—how will it be with black people living among the whites?"

Granman Yankuso rose, when he said this, and took from the chains of the suspended lamp a folded envelope. He handed it to us, and from it we took out a letter on the stationery of the League of Nations, signed by its Secretary, Sir Eric Drummond. As we were reading this, he left the council house and soon returned with a larger envelope, which he had kept uncreased, and from it brought out a photograph of the Council of the League of Nations in session. They were his proud possessions. While the World War lasted there was no work for the Bush Negroes on the river. They could not earn the money they needed to buy cloths for marrying and powder and rum for ceremonial usage. The Bush Negroes called it a "great money famine," in the way of their Anansi stories which so often began with "This was a time of great famine." Through a missionary on the upper river, the Granman learned of the war, and through him later of the League, which the missionary had undoubtedly brought up as the white man's defense against the challenge of the black tribal head, who asked, "How will it be with black people living among the whites?"

It was then that the Granman through this same missionary addressed himself to the white rulers far away, telling of the fear of the blacks, and counseling them the wisdom of peace!

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In the council house Granman Moana Yankuso was host to the Gankwe men. They were there to take their leave of him before starting down river. Asikanu, the handsome brother of the Gankwe clan head, who was sent away from his village while the elders were deciding upon his adultery

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

175 not sufficient to make them adopt the white man's culture.

Many of the rebels, indeed, had been born on the sugar plantations and raised in close contact with European civilization. These were probably inclined to modify in many details the West African habits of their parents. But the white man and his magic were the object of universal hatred among the blacks. They had no incentive to adopt European ways, when they were proud of their own. And when they escaped into the bush, they found a typical West African culture reconstructed in the Surinam bush by the escaped slaves who had preceded them. It was as though a section of West Africa had been picked up bodily and deposited almost intact in the South American jungle. To this day, therefore, we have many evidences of West African culture in the life of the Surinam Bush Negroes. Their entire social structure, with the exception of a few items borrowed from the [177] Indians and certain European inventions like gunpowder which were forced upon them, is analogous to that of the Old World.

178 Conditions were not the same in every particular. In 182 West Africa there is iron ore, and the art of iron working was invented and carried to a high point of perfection by the African natives. There is little iron ore in Surinam, so that the art of working it is lost to the Bush Negroes. A limited quantity of iron weapons and implements was pillaged from the plantations, and all of it was probably converted immediately into arrow-points, hatchets, and bush-knives, to carry on the guerilla warfare against the despised Europeans.

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

Common household implements for everyday use had to be made out of different material. Wood was used wherever possible. So in place of iron the Bush Negroes developed an elaborate and beautiful art of carving domestic utensils. Pots are stirred with wooden paddles instead of with iron ladles. Enormous wooden trays are used for carrying food. Combs, stools, beaters, and a dozen other implements all bear evidence of this extraordinary technique of wood carving, and this too is a heritage from their African ancestry.

In tracing the relationship between any two cultures, such as the West African and the Bush Negro, we should always bear in mind the possibility that both developed independently and that similarities between them may be due to the influence of similar environments rather than to actual culture contact. Thus, for example, while the Djuka corial is hollowed out of solid logs in a fashion similar to the West African canoe, which at once suggests borrowing, it is also true that the rapid waters of the Surinam, Marowyne, and Saramacca Rivers make any other kind of board or bark canoe impracticable. The Bush Negroes' dugout canoes may be an independent adaptation to the environment rather than a heritage from Africa.

This difficulty is a common one in anthropological speculation; examples are to be found on all hands. Thus, it has been maintained that the Reindeer Men who lived in France during the Magdalenian Age are related to the present-day Eskimo, because their bone implements and crude drawings bear certain resemblances, although the two races are

/510 cont./

relatives, nor any power of the man over the woman, nor even household cohabitation. The man and the woman each reside in the village of their maternal kin. The man goes to live with his wife from time to time, providing her with the imported commodities that she needs, notably salt, kerosene, cloth, and utensils, and felling trees for the clearings which she will exploit for the benefit of the household.

Divorce is entirely free. Unions are not very stable, mainly on account of the woman. Numbers of women are divorced four to five times during their lives.

The grand man, chief of the tribe, exercises over the Boni a power which is more religious than political.

The Boni are a pirogue-people. For more than a century they have been living by using their canoes for the benefit of gold-seekers and exploiting miners. The decline of gold extraction is depriving them more and more of their traditional resources. Some of them are emigrating temporarily to the coastal lumberyards. But all of them remain faithful to their villages and to their customs.

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The Oayana Indians (Roucouyennes /Rucuyen/). These Indians of the Caribe /Carib/ ethnic group have had only a few direct contacts with European civilization and still represent without alteration the human type which populated Guiana before the arrival of the Europeans. On encountering the Refugee Blacks, the Indians of the Guianese forest have been steadily and rapidly declining. Estimated at 30,000 at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Indians of French Guiana are now no more than about a thousand. In addition there must be included in this number 700 persons (Galibi and Arawak) who have been protected by their habitat in the savannas of the coast where malaria is less deadly than in the interior.

The accounts of travelers and the censuses made notably in 1730, 1759, 1787, and 1815 allow one to follow with precision this destruction of the autochthonous population since the first settlement of the Europeans in Guiana (2).

2. Dr. André Sausse, op. cit., pp. 67-98.

/10 cont./

162 The Boni, about 1,000 in number, occupy the course of the
131 Lawa between Abounasounga Falls to the north and the falls of the
Litani to the south. Their "great villages," that is, their residential
361 villages, are: Agodé (Boniville), Kotika, Asisi, Loka, Papaïston,
[103] Kormotibo, Lapé, and l'Enfant Perdu. Three small villages
founded more recently are established on the lower course of the
563 Maroni. The territorial implantation of the Boni has been dis-
turbed by the settlement of Creole gold miners on their territory
• 178 for three quarters of a century. Their demographic situation is
mediocre and their tribal organization, compared to that of the
[181] other tribes, has lost much of its strength. However, they still
make up a human grouping full of strength and originality.

131 The Djuka, whose "great villages" are in Surinam territory
361 on the /11/ Tapanahoni, can be evaluated at 7,000 to 8,000 in
[162] total. At the height of demographic expansion, their farming
[161] villages swarm on both banks of the Maroni and on the islands,
[648] penetrating more and more deeply into the interior of French
[619] Guiana, where in places they form small temporary groupings
living in symbiosis with the Creole gold miners; the Boni recognize
their right to cross their territory but not that of establishing
villages in it.

433 For a century the economy of the Refugee Blacks has been
648 founded on a symbiosis with the Europeans and Creoles; they furnish
[464] specialized labor (construction, but above all, transport) in ex-
[465] change for relatively high wages. This economy finds itself
[198] threatened by the gradual disappearance of gold mining; there is
[166] developing a tendency toward temporary emigration to the Euro-
pean work yards of Saint-Laurent analogous to that of the Saramaka
[182] of Surinam to French Guiana. This is a serious threat to the in-
terior cohesion of the tribes.

/15 cont./ Thus it was at
423 the time of the Lawa gold rushes (1890) that Grand Man Anato
643 caused rent to be paid by the Creole miners who were settling in
[648] the region. But this practice, excessive when the small portion
of this territory actually occupied by the Boni is considered, ended
423 up by falling into disuse. Nowadays things have fallen into the
648 opposite extreme, and the Boni find themselves having no right,
178 customary or otherwise, over the country of their ancestors; the
first comer, even of the Creoles from the British West Indies, can
settle anywhere, dislocating the apportionment of the land among
lineages. This situation has been harmful to the life of the tribe
by contributing to the scattering of the peopling. Perhaps it is
not too late to remedy the situation. An /16/ /Figure 2 appears
here./ /17/ African tribe cannot live wholesomely if there are no
definite relationships, entailing unquestioned rights, between the
group and the land.

423 The following modus vivendi has been in force for many
619 years:

a) The Djuka may circulate freely across Boni country, but
[486] they may not establish villages in it; if they wish to make clearings
[166] there, they must ask for permission from the grand man.
[226] Otherwise they have the right to fish on the Tanpok and the
Waki.

423 b) The Creoles may settle anywhere and make their clear-
648 ings where the lands are not used. But that does not modify in
the minds of the Boni the lineages' rights over the land; this
occupation is regarded as creating no new right; for example, the
Doglis habitation is built on the lands of Kormotibo village.

423 c) The Boni reserve for themselves along with the Oayana
648 Indians the exclusive right to fish on the Litani and the Maruini.
822 On these rivers the Djuka do not have the right to penetrate.
[619]
162 The Boni may be computed at a little less than 1,000 persons
all told.

/18 cont./

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[621]

Six lineages (1) of ancient founding are counted among the

• [178]

1. It seems that in the past there was a greater number of groups (they continue to use the expression twalɔfuyu lo, the 12 lo, to designate the Boni nation), but some have died out.

Boni; all, with one single exception, have remained effective groupings corresponding each one to a village; for these lineages the words bɛɛ and lo may be used indiscriminately. The seventh, Dipélu, is distributed in three villages under different authorities, that is, forms three lo.

[614] The lo possesses a head (hedeman or captain). The bɛɛ possesses neither head nor organization, but as we shall show, its members are united by religious ties and meet to celebrate common rites.

(See table on the following page.)

[643] The head of the Dikan lo is supreme chief -- grand man -- of the Boni.

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1. This conception of kinship is also found among the Agni of the Ivory Coast and the Fon of Dahomey; it may be widespread in Black Africa, especially in populations with matrilineal filiation.

601 602 613 614 209 571

/22/ This conception, associated with that of the kunu, conflicts with the fractioning of lineages on the religious plane, even when a scission has taken place on the plane of residence. The rigor of the principle laid down, the quasi-mathematical transmission from one generation to the next of appellations based on rank relative to the foundress, prohibits the thought that elements foreign to the lineage can be integrated into this system by any process whatever. Nevertheless, a doubt remains as to the possibility of assimilating fragments with paternal kinship, for in paternal kinship the same principle of classificatory kinship rules, and the same appellations are used. We shall show that such a process of assimilation actually exists on the social plane, but that it is inconceivable on the religious plane, the kunu always being transmitted by the mother. /Fig. 3 appears here./

602 613 614

Knowledge of genealogical ties is very variable from one lineage to another. Outside of the great splits like Dipélu I-Dipélu II, we have demonstrated that small fractions of several lineages could no longer be attached to the main trunk, the genealogical ties being irremediably lost. The people concerned had never realized this; they had never wondered about it. This was the case particularly:

—With Samma's descendants (Dipélu II, Asisi);

—With the group of Atili's descendants (Lapé, Boniville).

[178]

In both cases the split was very recent; old men dead for only a few years knew the genealogical ties now lost.

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591 /117 cont./

Atikati (daughters living with their father, groups of friends having no rights over the land).

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591 It seems that exceptions of this kind have always existed among the Refugee Blacks, but they are probably tending to become more numerous.

• 178 They do not appear to be due to a change of conception about family structure but to a development of individualistic tendencies. These groups of aberrant structure are particularly unstable.

361
241 Stability; changes of location. On this point there is no precise custom. Certain farming habitations are old, such as those of Sawen and Atikati, which certainly date from the beginning of the century. Most appear to last from five to ten years. Others, like that of Kwaku, have had only an ephemeral existence.

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166 The changes of location of habitations which have taken place in this region since 1950 have very variable causes: /118/ /Fig. 20 appears here/ /119/

△ Dyakata (Dip. I) left the region to live in the lower Maroni among the Paramaka for personal reasons.

○ Chili (Dip. I) went to settle near Maripasoula. Gave up his habitation at Simayé Falls because of manioc ants.

△ Kwaku (L) His habitation was too damp and the activity of the manioc ants too great. Henceforth lives all year in Loka.

[226] △ Akwadé (L) Had no habitation, created one in 1954 near Simayé Falls. Was looking for a site favorable for fishing, from which he lives almost entirely.

On the whole, it can be estimated that the average duration of a farming habitation is about ten years. In these moves,

[Text Continues on P. 173]

/122 cont./

846 834 856 Interruption of conjugal relations after the birth. For three months after delivery the mother must stay away from men and even avoid touching them. Conjugal relations must be interrupted until the child begins to walk alone (eleven to 14 months). However, it is tolerated (but disapprovingly) that they be interrupted only for the time until the child begins to drag himself [842] on his knees /123/ (eight months). They cite the example of Baïna's wife who has puny children after pregnancies at too short intervals.

846 834 862 178 593 Actually, the interruption of conjugal relations tends to be reduced more and more, the women having condensed milk available and tending to reduce the duration of breast feeding.

Each woman acts as she wishes in this respect; the husband has no power to restrain her.

The Name

551 553 Existence of several independent names. Each Boni has two names, the gaã nɛm or big name, given by the father, and the pikin nɛm or little name, given by the mother.

These two names are given in totally independent fashion. Generally the pikin nɛm is given first; in former days they used to wait until the child was six to eight months old; nowadays it is given at the end of a few weeks. The head of the lineage does not intervene either in the choice or the giving of the name.

As a matter of fact, nearly three-quarters of the Boni are designated by one single name, either because the father and mother agreed to give the same name or because one of the two names fell into disuse.

To these two principal names may be added any number of names and cognomens given by the grandparents and later by friends or spouse; often one of the names ends by being given

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553 613 [178] [162] Transmission of names. It seems that in former times children were by preference given the name of one of their classificatory uncles in the father's lineage. This custom is still clearly observable, but its practice is not general. In fact, out of about 670 persons counted in the villages on the French bank, including about 250 children younger than 14 years, there are only 64, or less than 25 per cent who bear the name of an adult living or dead. These 64 cases are divided thus:

	Mother's Lineage	Father's Lineage	Other Lineages
Name taken from among the child's classificatory brothers and sisters.	0	3	
Name taken from among the child's classificatory uncles and aunts.	3	37	11
Name taken from among the child's "grandfathers" and "grandmothers."	2	8	

Of these 64 names, 44 /sic/ are taken from the father's lineage, only five from the mother's.

[551] This table is only good for a simple indication. In order to go farther it would have been necessary to study separately the name given by the father and that given by the mother, which we could not do (let us recall that 75 per cent of the individuals are designated by a single name; either the father and mother agreed on the same name, or one of the two names fell into disuse after the child's early years.

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553 Let us remember simply that there is a clear tendency to choose the name from the paternal relatives of the child (1).

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1. It is a general rule among the populations of Black Africa from whom the Refugee Blacks borrowed their main cultural traits, the patrilineal Fon and Yoruba as well as the matrilineal and patrilocal Agni and Ashanti. The persistence of this custom among the Refugee Blacks tends to strengthen the patrilineal and patrilocal tendencies which were persisting among them at the time when their institutions were developing.

[198]

551 Apparently they avoid giving the name of a very old person or one recently deceased.

553 In this transmission of the name there does not seem to be anything other than a mark of affection toward a relative. No bond is created between the child and the adult whose name he bears. Obviously there is nothing in the beliefs of the Refugee Blacks which requires the perpetuation of names and their transmission from the dead to the living.

[613] When they wish to give one of their children the name of a person of another lineage, they must ask permission of this person, who does not necessarily grant it (he may fear that his name might thus be borne later by a thief or a ne'er-do-well).

If he does give his permission it does not, strictly speaking, involve any payment, but he may be offered a small gift.

[613] There is no need of any authorization to take a name borne by a person of the lineage of the child's mother or father.

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198 1) They show the continuity and vitality of the custom of the Refugee Blacks. The proportion of boys and girls brought up by the mother, the paternal grandmother, the father, etc. is noticeably constant from one generation to the other. There is no tendency for the proportion of children raised by the father to increase; it even seems to decrease, which may be related to the increasing instability of marriages. In fact, in spite of European influences, no evolution is observed toward patrilineal structures among the Refugee Blacks.

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591 2) The fact that part of the children are raised outside of their own lineage has few consequences for the unity of the group; for most of them, when their education is finished, come to settle down in one of the villages belonging to their lineage.

Of 88 men born before 1936, 28 were raised outside their lineage; 21 of them came back to it; only seven, or less than 8 per cent, settled down in other lineages.

Of 78 women born before 1936, 12 were raised outside their lineage, of whom only four, or 5 per cent, settled permanently outside their group.

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462 Education of children. If the education of girls does not necessitate a difficult apprenticeship, it is not the same for boys; the sum of knowledge that /132/ a Refugee Black must possess to carry out effectively the techniques of his group is considerable. In particular, he must:

--Know more than 200 kinds of trees with their uses, the way to fell them, the way to work their wood;

--Be capable of constructing boats of at least 10 kegs (1,000 kilograms of load). This technique alone requires several years of apprenticeship;

--Acquire sufficient knowledge of carpenter work to build his house and that of his wife;

--Learn how to handle boats on the river and the techniques of transport boating.

/133 cont./

866 461 434 made for sale, the guardian gives him a small sum out of the money gained. At 14 an adolescent begins to satisfy nearly all his own needs.

883 465 For example, from June to December, 1956, Tasa (14 years), son of Fintiman (Boniville) had earned about 13,000 francs:

June	helped his father build a large boat for the administration (45 days)	6,000
October	went to Saint-Laurent as auxiliary bossman .	3,000
December	helped convoy a boat of the border-fixing mission sent back empty to Maripasoula . . .	4,000
		13,000

882 868 His father, entrusted with his education, let him use this money in his own way; he pointed out to us with pride that for the first time in 1956 his son had been able to satisfy all his own needs, but that it was important to keep him under a firm hand until he was capable of doing a man's work alone: for that, five or six years of apprenticeship would not be too much.

868 561 [153] In fact, many times we had the chance to verify it, it is in this prolonged apprenticeship that are developed the seriousness of mind and the technical skill so remarkable among the Refugee Blacks. At 20 years, most of them still do not know how to do [582] anything worthwhile, and it is scarcely before 25 or 27 that they [178] become capable of /134/ painstaking work; in this respect the present tendency of the young boys toward precocious emancipation (the marriage age of men is going down to 20 and even 18 years) runs the risk of having very unfortunate consequences for the future of the Refugee Blacks.

429 [582] [583] The person charged with the education of a girl exercises the powers of a mother toward her. It is she who authorizes her to marry, and by giving her the pangi, married women's garment, gives her symbolically her freedom as a woman. It is to her that the first husband pays the price of the virginity of the girl.

/135 cont./

593 The same year, G..., man of about 50, particularly serious and hard-working, had saved up enough to buy an outboard motor; his mother, aged near 75 years, advised him absolutely not to make this purchase, claiming that he would be the object of jealousy and was risking being the victim of evil [765] spells; he gave up the project. He did not dare carry it out until 1957 after the mourning for his mother (dead in 1955) had been lifted.

To let one's mother be in need is considered a shame; if a mother has several sons, they divide up the purchases to be made for her benefit; each year one of them will cut the clearing intended for the mother; in exchange she will furnish couac and vegetables as long as her strength will allow her to work.

591 Ordinarily each of the sons, when he becomes 20 or 25 years old, builds himself in his village a house in which he lives alone. But it often happens that a man who has reached adulthood continues to live in his mother's house; for example, in 1952 in Loka village, Ayaubédé, about 40 years of age, was living with his mother Chii.

593 As for the authority of the mother over her daughters, it is [582] still much more strict and lasts all her life. The daughter may not marry without the authorization of her mother or of her [591] female guardian if she is not brought up by her mother. The married daughter has the use of a house that her husband built for her, but this house is situated near that of her mother. Since household life is intermittent and reduced to its simplest expression, she remains under the domination of her mother until the latter's death. Especially, she cannot travel without her permission.

593 In former times the authority of mothers over daughters 178 was tyrannical; they say that one might see an octogenarian mother requisition an old man's arm to strike her sexagenarian daughter who had disobeyed her. But nowadays this authority is battered [579] down by the development of individualism. From this results a growing dissoluteness in the girls and an increasing instability of unions.

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584 602 To ask for his second wife Bugi (Aw.B.1, F41, Asisi-Awara Bakka vge.) he had sent Dosu (Dip. I, E4, Boniville), his father Malobi's classificatory brother (although a very distant relative) and his younger sister by the same mother, Kulina, who made the marriage proposal to Bugi's mother and to her classificatory uncles Antonu and Mato.

582 178 [701] Age of marriage. In former times there was a very precise custom about this. Men were not authorized to marry before about 30 years of age, constituting until that age the immediately mobilizable armed force. Women were authorized by their mothers to marry only when they had reached complete physical development, or between 20 and 22 years. This was the safeguard of a society deprived of all medical help against obstetrical risk, particularly serious for very young women. When the fiancé had temporarily emigrated to earn his living, the marriage could be put off until the age of 25 years and more. [184] This late marriage of girls was still met with only a few years ago among the Djuka, more faithful to custom. There was on the average five to ten years of age difference between husband and wife. /145/

For about the past ten years, under the influence of the relaxation of family discipline, the marriage age has gone down considerably, as much for the man as for the woman. Nearly all the girls married during the last two years were from 15 to 17 years old. It can be stated that the average marriage age of girls is 18 years (1).

1. We are speaking here of the age at the time of the consummation of marriage.

/145 cont./

582 Generally speaking, the custom of the Refugee Blacks used to consider as immoral the marriage of a very young girl to an old man, or of a very young boy to an adult woman. 588 198 The weakening of family morals is clearly demonstrated by two events which happened during the summer of 1960. A boy of thirteen and a half, K... of Boniville, left his guardian to join an Assisi woman, A...., 20 years older than he and with a very bad reputation to boot; some months later his example was imitated /146/ by a boy of 14 who began living with a [684] woman of 29. Nothing like that had ever been seen, and [613] people inveighed against the scandal of it; but in both cases, guardians and lineage heads showed themselves incapable of making their authority respected by force.

882 [562] Marriage of girls. It can still be said (although things are in the process of changing rapidly) that girls, kweyi umã, occupy a place apart in the thought of the Refugee Blacks; the reprobation which embraces women does not extend to them. 882 834 [291] People say that girls "have good manners," and in fact most of them, although naked except for a little apron, have a reserved attitude, a becoming bearing, which contrast with the attitude of the married women. To tell the truth, this virtue is not so much due to natural inclinations as to the strict [593] vigilance with which their mothers surround them. The mothers literally do not let them out of their sight and permit no man to speak to them out of their presence. "Until dawn, until the cock crows, she keeps vigil," says the song, alluding to the mother who watches over her daughter's virtue. If a girl [836] comes to lose her virginity without being properly married, [599] pɔti na ɔsu, "established in a house," it is a dishonor for her mother and her near relatives.

/147 cont./

848 If the girl is pregnant, the man may not abandon her: that would make a great to-do between the two kin groups: he must stay with her at least until the birth of the child.

883 836 178 [582] Nowadays among the Boni things tend to happen completely otherwise than custom makes provision for. The general opinion is that girls can no longer be held down, that they escape more and more from the authority of their mothers; many of them begin to run wild at about 14 or 15, and people are obliged to marry them off precipitately at 15 or 16. It is difficult to say what the proportion of these hasty marriages is, but the recriminations heard on all sides on the subject of the shamelessness of girls give the idea that it is increasing. In the [582] [848] villages on the French bank, out of nine girls married in 1958 there were only four marriages concluded according to regulations; the five others had been arranged hastily either because the girl was pregnant (two cases) or because she had laid herself open to scandal. /148/

582 Nearly all girls married between 1952 and 1956 were 15 to 17 years old.

584 This is about how things happen:

A man who is attracted by a girl tries to exchange a few [537] words with her unknown to her mother. There are special forms for these declarations. One speaks in a low voice, very fast, using special formulas. This is how one of our boatmen, one evening in October, 1952, addressed young Lomé, age 15, of Boniville village, who had gotten away from her mother on the pretext of going to get water for us.

584 539 "Woman, I love thee, I wish to live with thee, I wish to marry thee. That which God put in me I cannot take away (1).

1. Which means: I cannot change, you must take me as I am.

/150 cont./

593 342 461 [198] Nothing marks better the small place the conjugal bond has in a man's life; imagine the torture which this forced living and crowding together represent for each of these women! The Boni of today, much richer than their ancestors and better equipped with tools, are singularly lazier in building houses; no longer is anyone seen to sculpture and decorate the façades lovingly; when a man, after many recriminations, decides to build a house for his wife, he is content most of the time now with a simple shelter with plaited walls, which does not require 30 days work.

595 As we have said, each man may take as many wives as he wishes, on condition that he can supply their needs; but in practice the maintenance of a household is so heavy a load that most men have only one or two wives; only one to our knowledge 593 has three. In fact, it is contrary to custom to free oneself by [461] paying for work which one must do for one's wife. We have [556] never heard it said that a rich man (many of them have hundreds [454] of thousands of francs in savings) paid money in place of a piece of work, or paid someone to do it for him. The furnishing of [439] imported objects is particularly burdensome, especially cloth, kitchen utensils (Boni women are infatuated with aluminum [511] objects), and occasionally jewels. The Boni conceded in 1958 that the maintenance of a wife amounted to 30 to 40 thousand [434] francs a year at least. If one considers that a hard-working man [511] earned about 120,000 francs a year, that he spent 30 to 40 [695] thousand francs a year for himself, that he often had /151/ in addition to provide for the needs of his aged parents and share the expenses of the festivals of the lineage, one sees that he could not have more than two wives at the same time. As for [434] less hard-working men, who have no more than 60 to 80 thousand [511] francs a year in ready money, they have a great deal of trouble [586] in facing the maintenance of a single household, and many divorces have no other cause.

/155 cont./

586 [163] Likewise Péechina, about 70 years old in 1957, separated from Nachinengé (Kotika) after having spent the greatest part of her life with him and having six children by him.

In order to be able to break thus a long standing union without undergoing moral collapse, it is certainly necessary for the affectivity of each one to be entirely centered on his maternal family.

586 124 Frequency of divorce. This essential aspect of the social life of the Refugee Blacks is not easy to lay hold on by direct interrogation. The women do not willingly talk about their past unions and let go in silence the ones which remained childless. However, we were able to reconstitute with rather 586 128 great certainty the past life of about a hundred women (mothers, near relatives, or wives of our most reliable informants). These men /"women" -- printing error. -- Tr./ are marked with a double asterisk ** in the population list of the villages.

[178] It is useful to classify them by age groups relating to the year of birth, for we shall see that the frequency of divorce seems to have increased with time. The groups chosen are the same as for the demographic investigation which we carried on parallel to the sociological study:

/156 cont./

586 [428] The estimate of the average number of divorces for women born before 1896 is probably lower than the actual number, their first divorces not being well known to our informants. It is probably in the neighborhood of two.

586 593 178 The increase in frequency of divorces among young women is striking. It is related to the weakening of the authority, very strong in former times, exercised by mothers over their daughters.

Here are two examples concerning two girls we have known since their childhood.

836 [558] Lomé (L2, F74, Boniville) born in 1938, began to cause people to talk about her in 1954. She was deflowered by N..., who did not want to marry her. Then she had relations with Asadam (K, Boniville), who did not want to marry her either. She was beaten; she continued to see him. Now this is extremely shameful for a girl because it is placing herself in a state of inferiority with respect to a man, when her self-respect consists in making a contract between equals.

582 586 587 Her brother Amèmbé beat her, and she ended up by marrying Pitipiti (Aw.B.2, Asisi village), who formally asked for her in marriage in 1956. This marriage lasted less than a year. In 1957 Lomé divorced him to marry Djoni (Kotika village).

584 584 585 [429] 586 Aguba (D u, G14), girl of Asisi-Dju village, born in 1941, had been proposed to with the customary formalities in May, 1956 by Païtiki (L2, Loka village), a young man of 18. It was agreed that the engaged couple would wait two years. But Païtiki did not wait and consummated the marriage clandestinely at the end of a few months. Lènga, Aguba's aunt and guardian, became very angry and beat her. She did not give her the [illegible] until May, 1957. The marriage lasted only a few months. /157/ By the end of 1957 Aguba was breaking off with Païtiki and beginning openly to look for adventures.

/157 cont./

586 If one considers all Boni women together without any age distinctions, one can estimate that on the average they have been divorced 2.5 times during the course of their lives between 18 and 65 years of age. The average duration of marriages (not counting unions broken by the death of one of the spouses) could be evaluated, for the period before 1950, at about 15 years. It tends to decrease in proportion as a generation brought up [178] under less strict discipline reaches adulthood (1).

1. Doctor Étienne Bois, revising in September, 1960 our card file stopped at the end of November, 1958, recorded for the villages on the French bank 28 divorces which had taken place in the course of this period of 1.8 years. The number of women of marriageable age in these villages being about 160, this figure corresponds to 0.1 divorce per woman and per year, or to an average duration of unions of about 10 years.

[162]

[837] Dissoluteness of the women. It appears that most wives are faithful to their husbands for the duration of the union. But since they have the possibility of breaking this union with no need of authorization by anybody whatever, they leave their husband very readily, whether they have stopped liking him or whether they intend to marry a richer man.

/158 cont./

848 If children are born of these irregular liaisons, the mother
[784] takes care to know with certainty who the father is, for if there
[753] were any doubt, the child, respecting a kina which would not
be his own, would contract leprosy. On this subject the Boni
842 have a remarkable belief: they think that it is the first man
with whom a woman has had relations after the end of a menstrual
period who is likely to make her pregnant.

836 These adventures always involve gifts in kind (cloth,
431 jewels); so the men who have the most success with women
are always short of money.

581 A woman who has lived thus in notorious fashion has a
little more difficulty than another in finding another husband,
but if she is young and winsome she succeeds.

548 Prostitution as such is very rare in Boni country, and the
women who give themselves over to it openly (three or four for
all the villages on the French bank) have generally left the
[836] tribe to settle in the gold miners' villages. Dissoluteness is
not considered dishonorable by the Refugee Blacks when it is
carried on within the tribe and when it has no other purpose but
pleasure; but prostitution is judged shameful.

834 Except for these few prostitutes, we have never heard it
648 said that a Boni woman had relations with a European; on this
point tribal discipline is observed with extreme rigor.

581 Conclusion. The average duration of marriages, which was
[178] from 15 to 20 years for the preceding generation, tends to be-
come shorter and can be estimated nowadays at about ten years.
[191] In spite of this evolution, the stability of marriages among the
Refugee Blacks remains noticeably greater than that observed
548 among the black populations of South America. Among them
is not seen the form of prostitution so widespread in South
America, the supported mistress who does not work and who
lives entirely at the expense of her successive lovers.

/158 cont./

156 The Boni woman, poor in emotional feelings, and jealous of her independence with respect to men, puts her pride into subsisting by her own efforts.

178 [156] The young women, even the ones with the freest habits, stay firmly attached to their village, to their plantings, and to the mode of life they received from their grandmothers. In fact, because of its structure and customs, the society of the Refugee Blacks has much less likelihood of suffering from the poisons spread by modern life than the patrilineal societies of Black Africa.

/159/ Death; Burial Rites

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Death is for the Refugee Blacks an event of extreme gravity.

795 In order to ward off danger and permit the yɔrka of the dead person to take its place among the ancestors, the unstinting cooperation of everyone is required.

764 765 181 [62] The ceremonies which have to do with death and mourning are by far the most important ones in the day-to-day life of the Refugee Blacks; for each one they represent a very heavy material load which is accepted without recriminations. It is really a veritable mobilization, which takes place within the framework of the village and not of the lineage. The apparatus [619] set into motion is independent of the lineage, for it must function in the same way for an outsider, Djuka or Saramaka, who dies during a trip.

764 868 767 Participation in the burial rites is for all an essential religious duty. From childhood the Boni are prepared for this task and become, some of them kisimã (coffin-makers), others ɔlɔmã (grave-diggers), some others wasimã (bathers of the dead).

767 467 Kisimã and ɔlɔmã. It can be said that in each village, ɔlɔmã and kisimã constitute customary societies, provided with an organization and wielding veritable powers for the duration of their work.

/190 cont./

428 178 A tendency which has appeared during recent years in connection with men consists in bequeathing during their lifetime the essential part of their property to the children they have raised.

613 [787] Inheritance of functions and powers. Upon the death of a lineage head, the yɔrka of the dead man is asked whom it wishes to see named. Then the council assembles to proceed with the nomination; it remains free in its choice, the will of the dead man beyond the grave does not have the force of law; but actually, it seems to be most often followed.

As for the function of captain which is common to all the fractions of one lo, the inheritance may pass from one fraction to another.

Ex.: for the Awara Bakka lo, the succession:
Asèmbay (Aw.B.2);
Pèèyon (Aw.B.1);
Kondoku (Aw.B.1).

/191/

CHAPTER VII

BELIEFS

Origin of the Beliefs of the Refugee Blacks

791 128 The spiritual life of the Refugee Blacks of the Guianas is intimately bound up with their social life, and the division we are obliged to make for the sake of clearness of the account is very often arbitrary. So we shall try to point out these connections wherever they are essential.

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What constitutes the religion of the Refugee Blacks is a synthesis of elements originating with various peoples of West Africa, especially the Ashanti, Agni, Mina, and Fon and also Congolese elements. This synthesis seems to have been born among the Saramaka, the first tribe formed at the beginning of the 18th century, and to have been adopted thereafter with modifications of detail by the Djuka, tribe created about 1760. The Boni, the last tribe formed, probably received these beliefs during the time of slavery which they spent under the tutelage of the Djuka, from 1815 to 1860. The beliefs of the Boni and those of the Djuka have an identical base; the rites and their effects on social life are exactly the same. Nevertheless, the Djuka, almost ten times more numerous, have been able to keep very differentiated conceptions and specialized cults, involving priests in the literal sense of the term.

The Boni have kept only the essentials, and many conceptions, especially the myths which serve as support for the whole tradition, are very much blurred among them.

The Boni like to imagine that Africans constitute only one nation, and that they have inherited in a lump the traditions and social forms of this nation. They know now (especially from having seen a good deal of the Senegalese riflemen of the 1937 French mission) that numerous tribes exist, but that has not shaken the veneration they have for Africa, source, for them, of all knowledge and all strength. However, almost nothing of the culture peculiar to each one of the great tribes has reached them; no name of an African nation has remained in their memory, and /192/ none of the languages of their land of origin has been kept (1); everywhere the vehicular language

1. One observes, however, that a certain number of disconnected details of African life have come down to them by oral tradition;

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[173] /192 cont./ thus it is that they have kept a rather exact description of the elephant (leu) and the gorilla (malẽgwana).

[648] imposed on the slaves has prevailed. There is nothing surprising about that, since the slaveholders tried, in order to prevent revolts, to mix to the maximum the Blacks of the various tribes.

174 A certain number of men initiated in differing degrees
177 into African cults were among the rebels. They tried to conserve and transmit these rites, which their descendants have more or less transposed or deformed (2). As far as one can

[182] 2. The single fact that the vegetation and fauna differed totally from those of Africa immediately required a modification of ritual which called for infusions of leaves of numerous plants to which definite magical properties are attributed.

[198] As far as one can judge by the secret languages attached to these cults, in which are recognized many words deformed from the ordinary language, and a few Indian words, these cults in their present state must
[178] differ appreciably from the ones which gave them birth. In fact, the only thing the Refugee Blacks have authentically kept is concepts, metaphysical and moral ideas.

/209 cont./

787 784 If someone has a Kumẽnti, certain objects used in the cult: pestle, mortar, machete, must not be raised near him. His gita "would rise" immediately. Likewise while he is eating, neither tiger n[illegible]un must be mentioned. To prevent their gita from rising, those concerned may take the precaution of putting a small piece of wood behind the ear while they eat.

787 178 [791] 181 484 [743] [755] These past years the cult of the Kumẽnti was clearly declining among the Boni, as was the whole of their religious life; every one, indeed, no longer thought about anything but earning money and was always traveling in order to do this, which made difficult the indispensable meetings and dances. On the other hand, cared for effectively when they are ill in the Maripasoula hospital, the Boni feel the cult of the Kumẽnti less necessary, of which the principal social function is to cure. So, while in 1948 we used to be present very often at manifestations of the gita of Kumẽnti, in 1952 they were becoming much rarer and more secret /modest/. They were tending to fall to the level of the latent manifestations of which we shall speak further on. In 1956 we did not observe in the course of the forest [346] work any spontaneous attack of this gita. The chapels dedicated to the Kumẽnti are scarcely maintained and are falling into ruins; such is the fate of the gods judged benevolent toward men. [751] Nevertheless people continue to lay great store by the ɔbia of Kumẽnti, especially the man nɛ̃ŋge ɔbia which protects against the machete and the gun, and the Kumẽnti bui, ring of Kumẽnti, instrument of divination.

776 [823] The Bũnsuŋki. The Bũnsuŋki are gods which live in the waters, by preference at the head of falls, beside rocks bearing copses of detached trees; they can also reside ordinarily in these trees themselves. [787] They appear sometimes in dreams to men as well as to women in the aspect of Indians, more commonly Indian women with long hair. This is why they are sometimes called wata Iŋgi, Indians of the water.

/210 cont./

The Bumba gadu, other gods of the same nature and equally feared, have as bearers other categories of snakes, principally the great anaconda water snakes.

The Voodū, we have said, are feared; they can exercise on a lineage the collective curse called kunu. But, no more than the Kumēnti do not represent a principle of good, they do not represent a principle of evil. Not all are so badly disposed toward men, and even if one of them is the enemy of a lineage, it is not for that reason badly disposed toward the rest of men. However this may be, the cult of possession of the Papa gadu is not at all in decline among the Boni. According to the cross-checking we have been able to do, of the 670 persons living on the French bank there are at least 40 to 50 who have a Papa gadu, the great majority of them old women.

/211/ The Voodū /sic/ are much feared, and for that very reason much respected. They are oracles which are consulted very often, without consideration of the evil their kunu has done and will still do. A god which exercises the kunu but which is provisionally declared appeased may be consulted without danger; it is always assumed that in any case its bearer, if he respects its commands, has nothing to fear from it.

It is possible that, very unconsciously, women use the fear that the Papa gadu gods inspire in order to maintain their independence and privileged position in Refugee Black society.

Instruction in possession appears to take as a pattern the same principles as that which correspond to the Kumēnti. It involves the teaching of the Papa language; this language appeared to us to be in decline; in fact, it is used only for formulas of greeting; then the possessed people vaticinate in ordinary language. Instruction in possession also involves daily ablutions with decoctions of leaves; certain of these mixtures are particularly complicated (it is said that they include more than a hundred different kinds of leaves). Instruction is essentially individual; however it also includes dances; on this occasion a

/235 cont./

787 But divination is more than that; the interpretation it
626 gives of the events of daily life is the very mover of the ani-
182 mistic society; presenting calamities /236/ as the punishment
571 of offenses against customary law, it is constantly vitalizing that law, conserving its practical value and its efficacity. What it expresses is not the hidden influence of chiefs or priests -- there are in fact neither chiefs nor priests among the Boni -- but the very consensus of the group, the deep feeling it has of its unity.

787 There are two large categories of divination:

The first consists of calling on a divinity through the
[791] medium of its bearer. For that, one applies to a person (of his lineage if possible) who has a gadu. This is a service which is rarely refused. This person employs the appropriate procedure for calling his gita and enters into trances. The god speaks, the question is put to it; if it is well disposed, it may give the explanation or the advice requested. For example, one asks for advice before looking for another sector to make his clearings.

787 Suggestible as the Boni may be, they do not fail to per-
792 ceive that all the gods interrogated do not give the same directions. So they think that certain ones are stronger than others; there are people whose gita is considered to be particularly
[791] good, others whom they have stopped consulting entirely. The defunct head of Kotika village, Bayo, used to have a gita so remarkable that people would come from very far to consult it.

[829] The general opinion is, furthermore, that nowadays
[178] everything is degenerating and that good gita are no longer seen as in the olden days.

787 These consultations involve only a very modest remuner-
[791] ation, a bottle of tafia at most (1). If it is not a matter of a

1. The remuneration of the possessed person is in question; the god always demands a payment for itself, of variable size according to its whim.

/242 cont./

754 Of course he was recognized as a wisimã by the first
764 adjuration made to his body carried in the papay on the heads
787 of two men: "If thou art a wisi man, do not come toward us."
The dead man drew back. /2../

[784] /243/ Continuation of the interrogation showed that he had not yet killed anybody, but that he had been killed by Odun when he was preparing to kill someone of his lineage.

754 The persecutors of Agyémési, contrary to their hope, did not recover after his death from the maladies which they were attributing to his sorcery; that did not shake their conviction in
755 the least. They left for Paramaribo to have themselves treated
648 by a Creole magician (for the Surinam Creoles, who practice white magic and black magic indiscriminately, are by this fact reputed to be more expert than the Refugee Blacks in combating the effects of wisi).

754 In recounting this story to us, the grand man told us that it is always necessary to be cautious with accusations of wisi,
[762] because one can never be sure. A man unjustly accused can
[784] commit suicide and pursue his accusers with his kunu (most of the Boni state that they would do so in such a case). In former
173 times, the barbarous punishments in use in Africa were applied
683 to revealed wisimã: they were burned alive. But people tell
784 that one of them, some months afterward, undertook against his accusers' lineage a kunu which still lasts today. He had been
[178] wrongly condemned! It is through fear of the kunu more than through care for humanity, that these punishments have been abolished.

754 It certainly seems that the constant fear of the wisimã in
[152] which the Boni live is only a collective hallucination, and that rare indeed are those who dare to indulge in practices which might draw upon them such terrible social and religious sanctions. As for these practices themselves, they appear to be without any real content, and the misfortunes attributed to them are

754 766 /245 cont./ ground, after scattering the cloths which were covering her, and left without carrying out any rite.

"Next we went to Boniville, the grand man invoked Odun on our behalf, stating that we had only followed his laws and that he had to protect the performers of the job against any distressing consequence."

754 181 ● 178 Development of sorcery. Since 1957 Boni country has been passing through a crisis; /246/ fear of sorcery is poisoning village life, while in 1948-50 it was a preoccupation of secondary importance.

[578] That is due to the fact that the rapid growing rich of part of the Boni aggravates jealousies and suspicions. Moreover, these affairs tend to appear in series. Since the case related above (1958), in which a woman, N...., was convicted of having paid a Creole quimboiseur to make the grand man die, an affair which strongly impressed the Boni, they tend to see wisi in all misfortunes that occur.

[167] In November, 1958 the death of a little girl of 12 of Kotika village was attributed to her uncle Mbomaolo, who had recently emigrated to Surinam and settled in a Creole village. [787] It is believed that he "committed himself," that is, that he sold his soul to the devil (1), which necessitates sacrificing one

1. This notion, which plays such a large role in West Indian beliefs, has no equivalent among the Refugee Blacks. There is no word in the Boni language for translating the term "committed." They translate thus: a e suku didibi, he [776] seeks the devil. The Boni do not have a clear image of the devil, and this notion remains, in fact, foreign to their beliefs.

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of his near relatives, his sister's children being regarded as the victims most pleasing to the demon.

Although in former times one to two out of ten deaths were attributed to wisi, in 1957 and 1958 out of 14 adult deaths of which we could obtain the explanation, there were:

[784] --Four wisimã killed by Odun, including two women of over 85 who during their lifetime had never been the object of unfavorable notice;

[761] --One death by the action of a wisimã,

or a total of more than a third of the deaths; out of the nine others, two were looked upon as natural deaths (dead of old age), seven were attributed to the kunu.

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The Refugee Blacks and Creole magic. Some of them go to get from the lukumã what their own social morals forbid: vengeance or success acquired at the expense of other people. They have uttered an oath that prohibits the practice of wisi: for most of them it is clear that if they paid a piayeur /magician, sorcerer/ to harm someone, it would be the same as if they performed the sorcery themselves. But others make a mental reservation on this point.

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In 1951, G..., of the Kotika lo, then about 20 years old, felt ill while staying at Saint Laurent. He went to find a Creole maïtif (clairvoyant) who presented him with a mirror, announcing to him that he was going to see in it the face of the one who had piayé /bewitched, cast a spell on/ him. G... saw nothing in the mirror. The maïtif was not upset at this and revealed to him that the piayeur must be someone in his wife's family. G... then recalled a dispute he had had some time previously with one of his wife's brothers and let himself be convinced: since that day he has not gotten along with his brother-in-law.

/296 cont./

888 829 This is a point of view which has great importance in the eyes of the Boni, for whom finishing one's days at the hospice or being reduced to asking for the help of outsiders constitutes the worst downfall.

829 They fear, moreover, as we have shown, Creole magic which they liken to a form of wisi.

On the other hand, they are impressed by the attainments of the Creoles, the real spirit of initiative and the strong personality of some of them; moreover, the Boni who have been to Cayenne have noticed the solicitude of the administration 829 with respect to the population of the communes. For all these 177 reasons there exists among the Boni a certain body of opinion 178 in favor of creolization. But the very unique type of life of the [114] Boni and their desire to keep their special customs attach them to their ancestral form of life; about 1890 the explorer Coudreau, observing the same facts, was predicting imminent creolization of the Boni. In fact, this did not happen, and it is unlikely to.

648 464 Traditional relations with Europeans. The Refugee Blacks constitute an important element in the economic life of the Guianas; on behalf of the administration and European enterprises they perform many jobs (boating, wood-floating, tree-felling). 648 461 They are not well adapted to other kinds of work, but in these activities which fit with their traditional mode of life they are [465] equal if not superior to any labor. Very highly paid, they work with speed, effectiveness, and intelligence, exhibiting an initiative and sense of duty not commonly found in Africans(1).

[177]

1. It is to be noted that if they stop leading their traditional kind of life, for example if they settle permanently near European establishments, they rapidly lose these qualities.

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648 Never do they appeal to the courts to settle their differences, still less their family quarrels; never do they beg for help.

829 The Europeans' material superiority does not impress them: the whites are more able in mechanics, but they are more able in magic, that is all. The efficacy of European medicine does [758] not shake their convictions: if someone has reasons to believe himself victim of the anger of a gadu, he begins by making the sacrifices intended to appease it, then asks it for authorization to have himself cared for by the whites. Personally we have [123] never done anything to disabuse the Boni of this idea which [753] satisfies at the same time the requirements of medicine and those of social discipline, for it must not be forgotten that for them 177 sickness is punishment for an offense. Thus one sees that unless it is deliberately brought to bear against tradition and against the leaders, the influence of Europeans is without appreciable effect on the civilization of the Refugee Blacks. It is no longer the same when contacts become too frequent, tend to alter drastically the way of life, and especially when these influences become openly "civilizing."

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The Future of the Refugee Blacks

Obliged to solve all the problems of life by their own means, the Refugee Blacks have been able to adapt with intelligence to the evolution of the modern world, and their custom 648 has kept all its vigor and effectiveness. Their future would not seem to be threatened if a wave of opinion had not come to the surface these past years, in French Guiana as well as in Surinam, to destroy their civilization, deemed primitive and barbarous, and to fuse them into the population of the coast. This result would be obtained in particular by schooling and evangelization.

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181 ETHOS--general orientation of the culture; predominating interests, values, themes, and motivations; characterizations of the total culture (e.g., as "conservative," "competitive," "militaristic," "spirit-ridden," "Apollonian," "folk," "urban"); allegations and inferences as to national character; etc.

See also:

Cooperation and competition 47
Prevalent personality types 187
Ethics 577
General character of religion 771
Social philosophy 829

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

643 159 In our own terms, if we were to picture the Granman as a splendid savage, cheerful, guileless, childlike, flattered by our interest, we would be belying his gifts of sophistication, and he would thank us little for these romantic outlines which, according to the values of his own civilization, would be insulting.

829 538 796 The code of life among these people was expressed in the proverb we had heard often spoken. "There are men on the upper river, there are men on the lower river, too." For survival in this bush, a man needed to match his strength and his wits and his magic, his kindliness and his enmity against those of any other. And the Bush Negro is a realist, for, as we had seen, not even the gods could be depended upon to be consistent—consistently good or consistently evil. The Bush Negro's gods, like humans, often did things for unaccountable reasons, because of a momentary whim, because of a desire to try the untried.

829 181 It was good to be guileless, but sometimes a man had to be a tiger, had to stalk his prey from behind. It was well enough to be a tiger, but sometimes a man needed the cunning of the bush hero, spider Anansi, who knew how to outwit the tiger. It was well enough to be an eagle, and be free and fly high, but sometimes a man needed the wit of the little bird konubri, who became king of all birds, because, when in the kingdom of birds there was a contest for the throne, it was he who, by perching on the back of the eagle, flew highest of all.

643 159 In the simplest of our own terms, Granman Moana Yankuso could be said to be a superb politician. In his villages, marriage alliances were calculated with the nicety of the best statesmanship. Whatever his own views, he saw to it that he never defied the arbiters of magic or the clan of the seat of magic, the Dahomey people. Toward the women of strange villages who came to see the white man and his woman, he showed an easy gallantry, which could not have been but flattering. When addressing the women who carried children astride their backs, he would speak gently to them and call them "mother" in greeting, and

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

fascinated. It showed, in its purest form, the retention of the African mask-like head. Sometimes on the prow of a boat we would see in cruder form the outlines of a mask, and once an old woman came with a food stirrer to us. Its handle ended in a knob which with a few strokes of the knife had been formed into a double representation of the human head, a perfect parallel to the type of mask that is associated with the people of the Ivory Coast.

Aside from the decorated apinti drum, only some of the workaday art forms of Africa—combs, paddles, mortars, among other such objects—were retained. For their decoration the designs that in Africa had been cut into the base of figures or about the borders of masks had been remembered and reinterpreted in terms of the ancestral cults. And from those memories the Bush Negroes had developed the unique art which is theirs.

Thus, in the main, the art was symbolic, and many of the designs represented the urge for reproduction. Some stemmed from the fertility cult, though not entirely of it. There was, for example, the double-bladed food stirrer, which was given by a man to his wife with a curse woven into its curves for the woman if she committed adultery.

There were carvings that did not deal with sex at all. On the lower river we sat on the shore as a canoe came up. Prow and stern were carved. On one of the seats was a representation of the head of a feline, done with the utmost realism.

"You have *tigri*?" we asked the man, as we bargained for the seats.

"I will sell you this, but do not ask me what it means."

The bird-headed paddles were also examples of this kind. When laid on their sides, they showed the form of the parrot, or whatever bird they represented—the exaggerated beak, the head, the neck, the wings, and the feet. The design called *Alukutu folo*, an emblem of those who could see into the future, was engraved on many benches on the upper river in particular, and these carvings were parted with only with the greatest reluctance, lest we try

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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INTRODUCTION

I FIRST met the Djukas in St. Laurent, which is the prison 114
port of French Guiana, and the centre of the penitentiary system which is popularly known as the Devil's Island Penal Colony.

The Djukas come in to St. Laurent from the jungle. They come to trade jungle rubber and timber for bright beads and gunpowder and fish-hooks and the brilliant lengths of calico [139] which they use as loin-cloths. When they have made their purchases they often pause on their way back to the canoes which they have left moored at the bank of the wide copper-coloured river which separates French from Dutch Guiana. They pause outside the penitentiary gates and stare at the French convicts as they are marched out to the hard labour which is part of their prison sentence.

And I could have had no more dramatic introduction than this to the wild free Djukas of the Guiana jungle.

The convicts march with the listless feet of diseased, under-nourished, hopeless men. They are sad and silent. The Djukas 181
stand erect, confident, and free. In the primitive communism of their forest life, they recognize no masters. It is in every Djuka's power to live as well as does every other Djuka. There is just enough social organization to keep order in the tribe and no more. There are no anarchists among them. No

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2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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one feels any grudge against society. There is small temptation to theft. There are, therefore, no questions of capital and labour, no leisure class, no organized industries, no exploitation either of men or of raw materials, no banks to rob, no checks to forge. Under such conditions economic crimes are practically eliminated. Man lives off the jungle and the streams which intersect it, and there are at his disposal uncounted miles of stream and of jungle. Such crimes as exist among the human inhabitants of these forests arise chiefly in quarrels over women. But where divorce is free and instantaneous, and sexual relationships are taken lightly, even the difficulties between men and women are enormously simplified.

And as these Djukas stood curiously staring outside the prison gates of St. Laurent, they seemed to me to stand in judgment. When I watched them get into their canoes and paddle upstream, returning to their green jungle fastnesses, and heard them call to one another from canoe to canoe, and heard their laughter ring out across the sunlit water, I felt that they went back to the forest, well content that their slave ancestors of two hundred years ago had fled from the white man and all his ways, back to the jungle, there to lead the primitive life of their African forbears.

I had gone to French Guiana to study the convict life of the Devil's Island Penal Colony. And when that had been completed, my husband and I made a journey through the interior of Dutch Guiana, travelling by the streams and trails used by fugitives from the French prisons. This is how we

/8 cont./

241 177 experience of the American Indians, which seem the only utilizable ones in the interior of the country.

Thus these populations which are so varied have in large measure the same agriculture and the same food.

241 [262] [171] Basic crops are manioc, consumed in the form of couac (flour roasted and granulated) which is the base food, the Indian yam, and tubers analogous to taro (dachine, "Caribbean cabbage"). The Refugee Blacks plant mountain rice in addition. The Creoles do not plant rice but have on the other hand a greater variety of vegetables and fruits.

31 36 182 Men in Guiana live on the rivers; villages and cultivated lands are to be found on their banks; everywhere else one finds only the deserted forest; only Creole gold miners, constrained by their work, sometimes establish their villages far from watercourses.

181 182 171 The Refugee Blacks, like the Indians, love the rivers where they find, along with water and light, the possibility of moving without hindrance; they are a people of canoeists; their traditions are widely influenced by life on the river, and their mode of living finds in this a deep originality.

131 133 182 171 In fact, setting aside the gold miners' villages, we can say that the populations of the Guianas living by exploitation of the natural resources of the country have a linear habitat: it can be estimated not in surface but in length, for it is limited to a band of one kilometer along each watercourse accessible to pirogues. These watercourses are limited in number, for one can take for granted that at a distance of some 20 kilometers from the source of each river, the congestion caused by fallen trees and parasitic vegetation prevents easy movement.

[161] [226] Actually, considering the very low density of the population, the small rivers are scarcely utilized except as fishing places.

487 501 All the rivers are interrupted by falls and rapids which render the use of large boats impossible. The pirogues of the Refugee

/10 cont./

162 131 36 [103] The Boni, about 1,000 in number, occupy the course of the Lawa between Abounasounga Falls to the north and the falls of the Litani to the south. Their "great villages," that is, their residential villages, are: Agodé (Boniville), Kotika, Asisi, Loka, Papaï'ston, Kormotibo, Lapé, and l'Enfant Perdu. Three small villages founded more recently are established on the lower course of the 563 Maroni. The territorial implantation of the Boni has been disturbed by the settlement of Creole gold miners on their territory 178 for three quarters of a century. Their demographic situation is mediocre and their tribal organization, compared to that of the [181] other tribes, has lost much of its strength. However, they still make up a human grouping full of strength and originality.

131 361 [162] [61] [648] [619] The Djuka, whose "great villages" are in Surinam territory on the /11/ Tapanahoni, can be evaluated at 7,000 to 8,000 in total. At the height of demographic expansion, their farming villages swarm on both banks of the Maroni and on the islands, penetrating more and more deeply into the interior of French Guiana, where in places they form small temporary groupings living in symbiosis with the Creole gold miners; the Boni recognize their right to cross their territory but not that of establishing villages in it.

433 648 [464] [465] [178] [166] [182] For a century the economy of the Refugee Blacks has been founded on a symbiosis with the Europeans and Creoles; they furnish specialized labor (construction, but above all, transport) in exchange for relatively high wages. This economy finds itself threatened by the gradual disappearance of gold mining; there is developing a tendency toward temporary emigration to the European work yards of Saint-Laurent analogous to that of the Saramaka of Surinam to French Guiana. This is a serious threat to the interior cohesion of the tribes.

/63 cont./

591 626 156 [761] that he can protect himself only by submitting to the law of the group. In this doubtless must be seen the deep reason for the importance attached to death and mourning, events around which is centered the activity of the usual societies and which entail a veritable mobilization.

626 771 It would be very difficult to condense the custom of the Refugee Blacks into a rigorous code. If one wished to do it, one would have to write as Article 1: "The living will conform to the will of the gods and the ancestors as it is expressed through the mouths of those possessed and by the movements of the bearers of the dead."

613 619 Each one of the tribes of the Refugee Blacks is formed of a certain number of matrilineages.

There is no limit on the number of these lineages, and it can be asserted that if any lineage whatever, detached from another tribe, asks to live in the midst of the Boni, it will be welcomed. From the first generation the children consider themselves as Boni.

In this regard one can cite the example of the Awara Bakka 3 lineage and that of the small lineage founded in Boniville by a Djuka woman, wife of Grand Man Ochi. All her descendants consider themselves Boni. /64/

[829] [643] But only the great lineages which constituted the tribe at its origin are social units recognized by the grand man, and only their heads are called to be members of the council.

128 We shall study first the interior functioning of the lineage, then the institutions going beyond the framework of the lineages.

/158 cont./

156 The Boni woman, poor in emotional feelings, and jealous of her independence with respect to men, puts her pride into subsisting by her own efforts.

178 [156] The young women, even the ones with the freest habits, stay firmly attached to their village, to their plantings, and to the mode of life they received from their grandmothers. In fact, because of its structure and customs, the society of the Refugee Blacks has much less likelihood of suffering from the poisons spread by modern life than the patrilineal societies of Black Africa.

761 /159/ Death; Burial Rites

795 Death is for the Refugee Blacks an event of extreme gravity. In order to ward off danger and permit the yɔrka of the dead person to take its place among the ancestors, the unstinting cooperation of everyone is required.

764 765 181 [621] [619] The ceremonies which have to do with death and mourning are by far the most important ones in the day-to-day life of the Refugee Blacks; for each one they represent a very heavy material load which is accepted without recriminations. It is really a veritable mobilization, which takes place within the framework of the village and not of the lineage. The apparatus set into motion is independent of the lineage, for it must function in the same way for an outsider, Djuka or Saramaka, who dies during a trip.

764 868 769 Participation in the burial rites is for all an essential religious duty. From childhood the Boni are prepared for this task and become, some of them kisimã (coffin-makers), others ɔlɔmã (grave-diggers), some others wasimã (bathers of the dead).

767 467 Kisimã and ɔlɔmã. It can be said that in each village, ɔlɔmã and kisimã constitute customary societies, provided with an organization and wielding veritable powers for the duration of their work.

/195 cont./

794 The laws of Odun. The cult of Odun (Odū) is the keystone of
• [181] the social and religious structure of the Refugee Blacks. It is a very secret cult; its rites are not practiced in the presence of outsiders and all curiosity about it meets with frank hostility.
[123] The Boni, who talk rather freely about the cults of possession, are mute on the subject of Odun, and one may spend years among them without even hearing this name uttered.

794 The worship of Odun is common to the Boni and the
184 Saramaka (perhaps this is what explains the trustful relations which exist between the two groupings). Among the Djuka it is replaced by the worship of Gwangwéla (Grantata), which has exactly the same functions and rites.

796 Odun is not to be confused with the creator God Nana (Masa Gadu). The myths explaining the relationship of these two entities were not known by our informants, but it is clear that Odun was sent to men by Masa Gadu as legislator and judge.

671 Odun's laws have a profound originality, as much by their content as by the sanctions which accompany them. It is not excessive to speak of a religious and moral doctrine of the Refugee Blacks.

[641] These laws appear in negative form. A certain number of acts and behavior are forbidden to those who have entered the society of the Refugee Blacks by taking an oath which binds
784 them for good and all. Offenders will be punished without the direct intervention of men, by the all-powerful action of Odun, who will kill them or /196/ strike them down with sicknesses. As a general rule, Odun's punishment is death; this is what explains the fear his name inspires.

673 Odun forbids:
[754] --Sorcery, wisi, in the most general sense, that is, any magic action having as its purpose the killing, making ill, and in a general way doing harm to another person.

/200 cont./

787 --Possession is manifested by kinds of trances called gita or kɔ̃mfo, of a varying nature according to the divinity concerned, which sometimes involve phenomena of insensibility and acts impossible to perform in a normal state;

789 --The first time the divinity enters a man, it imposes
792 a kina (interdiction) upon him which will henceforth be the
784 sign of his function. This is what is called a gadu kina. This kina varies from one divinity to another, but in principle a given divinity imposes the same kina on its divers bearers. The divinity names itself and indicates to its bearer a means of calling it back in case of need: make such-and-such gestures, scatter such-and-such a liquid or powder.

All that is recorded by those present who reveal it to the person possessed when he has come round.

It is taken for granted that the god protects its bearer as long as the latter respects the laws of its cult and observes its kina (in the opposite case the god may punish him cruelly).
787 Conversely it is assumed that the man has a certain power, a
796 certain right over the god who possesses him. They say that he
789 is the master of it, masa, word which is habitually used in the
428 sense "to be the owner of." At his death he can bequeath this god in the forms and according to the laws regulating the inheritance of property. Of course the god is capable of not ratifying this decision, and it is free to manifest itself in anyone it wishes. But they affirm that in most cases it follows docilely the choice of its bearer. We shall see that this inheritance of gods plays an essential role in the functioning of the kunu.

787 Apprenticeship for possession. What goals does a man pursue
181 who desires thus to have a gadu? Above all he seeks strength. To succeed in life, to be protected against his enemies, to be respected: Such are the goals generally pursued and openly recognized by the Refugee Blacks who "have a gadu."

/201/

787 One also often finds as an avowed goal the idea of being
•181 useful to his lineage.

Disinterested mystical impulses appear totally absent from these cults.

787 But that is only one aspect of the phenomena of possession;
154 they really seem to be, in large measure, unconscious and
787 involuntary. Everyone can try to obtain a gadu, but everyone
797 does not succeed; one must have a certain predisposition.
[154] "One cannot oblige a gadu to enter a man," say the Boni; it certainly seems, in fact, that in nearly half the cases possession takes place spontaneously and sometimes to the great terror of the person concerned: this is observed especially in the kunu.

[776] Mimi, a woman about 46 years old in 1958, of the Kotika lineage, was possessed by two gadu, an Ampuku and a Papa gadu. Here is how her near relatives relate the fashion in which they came into her.

[158] About ten years before, Mimi was showing signs of mental derangement. Her mind wandered, she sometimes used to leave the village to run in the bush at random, she uttered disconnected words (1). Then she fell very ill (pleurisy?).

[828]
[171]

1. It is necessary to note on this subject the very widely held idea among the Refugee Blacks, as among the Creoles, that certain forms of mental imbalance are due to the action of an entity which is trying to manifest itself in a man and does not succeed. In order to cure this man, he must be "washed" with appropriate leaves so that the god can come to manifest itself in him; the rest of the time he will be normal.

[755]

/202 cont./

153 791 787 776 535 [868] --Pupils are taught, individually or collectively, to dance in the manner of the god. Indeed, each divinity has a characteristic form of dance, which it executes sometimes by using the bodies of its bearers when it comes into them. The pupil must imitate as best he can the individual movements and the rhythm of this dance, while the teacher, using the appropriate drum, beats out the calling formulas.

If the god is satisfied with the student, he will be able to come into him.

791 787 785 153 These exercises appear to have as their goal the creation in the pupils of forms of conditioned reflexes; they have nothing in common with the very harsh ordeals which the medicine man of the Guiana Indians imposes upon himself, and do not involve any form of asceticism. It does not seem that chastity, even temporary, is demanded of the student, any more than fasting or doing anything contrary to his inclinations.

787 791 The idea of a spiritual death and resurrection of the possessed person, with all the ritual it entails: long reclusion of the neophytes, change of name of the one possessed, who is supposed to relearn all the activities of ordinary life, does not appear to have been kept by the Refugee Blacks. In a general [152] way, the atmosphere of solemn seriousness, /203/ of secrecy, and of fear, which characterize the Dahomey cults of possession is not found among them.

791 787 435 [436] These lessons are always paid for and are even very expensive. Payment is made in pieces of cloth, in demijohns of tafia.

Having a Kumẽnti amounted in 1958 to at least 25,000 francs. This payment is not only compensation for the teacher; [181] it is the mark of legitimacy. What has not been paid for is not, for the Refugee Blacks, legitimately acquired. We shall come back to this important point later.

/209 cont./

787 784 If someone has a Kumẽnti, certain objects used in the cult: pestle, mortar, machete, must not be raised near him. His gita "would rise" immediately. Likewise while he is eating, neither tiger nor gun must be mentioned. To prevent their gita from rising, those concerned may take the precaution of putting a small piece of wood behind the ear while they eat.

787 178 [771] [781] [484] [743] [755] These past years the cult of the Kumẽnti was clearly declining among the Boni, as was the whole of their religious life; every one, indeed, no longer thought about anything but earning money and was always traveling in order to do this, which made difficult the indispensable meetings and dances. On the other hand, cared for effectively when they are ill in the Maripasoula hospital, the Boni feel the cult of the Kumẽnti less necessary, of which the principal social function is to cure. So, while in 1948 we used to be present very often at manifestations of the gita of Kumẽnti, in 1952 they were becoming much rarer and more secret /modest/. They were tending to fall to the level of the latent manifestations of which we shall speak further on. In 1956 we did not observe in the course of the forest [346] work any spontaneous attack of this gita. The chapels dedicated to the Kumẽnti are scarcely maintained and are falling into ruins; such is the fate of the gods judged benevolent toward men. [751] Nevertheless people continue to lay great store by the ɔbia of Kumẽnti, especially the man nɛ̃ŋge ɔbia which protects against the machete and the gun, and the Kumẽnti bui, ring of Kumẽnti, instrument of divination.

776 [823] The Bũnsuŋki. The Bũnsuŋki are gods which live in the waters, by preference at the head of falls, beside rocks bearing copses of detached trees; they can also reside ordinarily in these trees themselves. They appear sometimes in dreams to men as well [787] as to women in the aspect of Indians, more commonly Indian women with long hair. This is why they are sometimes called wata Iŋgi, Indians of the water.

/241 cont./

152 828 754 777 Jealousy. To speak of jealousy as a negative magic force is not to be false to the thought of the Refugee Blacks. They regard it as an attenuated force of wisi, capable of bringing misfortunes even if no sorcery has been formulated. Jealousy is very marked in their character, associated with an individualism verging on asocial tendencies. When somebody is accused of wisi, jealousy is the commonest explanation of the crimes attributed to him; it is thought for example that a man can be jealous of his brother's growing rich to the point of making him die; that a woman may be jealous of the beauty or health of her sister's children. Not laying themselves open to jealousy is the constant preoccupation of the Refugee Blacks; one observes it in daily behavior, for example in the greetings which they exchange on the river. They never say, "I am well," but: "I feel only fair." If they come back from hunting they say, "I found a little."

152 156 828 576 Examples are not lacking of people who avoid building a fine house or buying an outboard motor in order not to give cause for jealousy. This preoccupation has profound repercussions on the material life and the economy of the Refugee Blacks; it explains in particular the absence of specialized professions and trade among them.

[182] [463]

Many aspects of the customary law of the Refugee Blacks have no other function than to exorcise, if one may say so, tendencies toward jealousy and selfishness which, if they were given free rein, would poison the life of the collectivity.

[183] [591]

76 181 725 828 The rites of death and mourning, which we have shown to constitute the pivot of the social life of the Refugee Blacks, are entirely based on the idea of preserving the surviving spouse from the effect of the jealousy of the deceased.

754 766 /245 cont./ ground, after scattering the cloths which were covering her, and left without carrying out any rite.

"Next we went to Boniville, the grand man invoked Odun on our behalf, stating that we had only followed his laws and that he had to protect the performers of the job against any distressing consequence."

754 181 178 Development of sorcery. Since 1957 Boni country has been passing through a crisis; /246/ fear of sorcery is poisoning village life, while in 1948-50 it was a preoccupation of secondary importance.

[578] That is due to the fact that the rapid growing rich of part of the Boni aggravates jealousies and suspicions. Moreover, these affairs tend to appear in series. Since the case related above (1958), in which a woman, N..., was convicted of having paid a Creole quimboiseur to make the grand man die, an affair which strongly impressed the Boni, they tend to see wisi in all misfortunes that occur.

[167] In November, 1958 the death of a little girl of 12 of Kotika village was attributed to her uncle Mbomaolo, who had recently emigrated to Surinam and settled in a Creole village.

[787] It is believed that he "committed himself," that is, that he sold his soul to the devil (1), which necessitates sacrificing one

1. This notion, which plays such a large role in West Indian beliefs, has no equivalent among the Refugee Blacks. There is no word in the Boni language for translating the term "committed." They translate thus: a e suku dídibi, he seeks the devil. The Boni do not have a clear image of the devil, and this notion remains, in fact, foreign to their beliefs.

[776]

754 /246 cont./
181 of his near relatives, his sister's children being regarded as
178 the victims most pleasing to the demon.
[382]

Although in former times one to two out of ten deaths were attributed to wisi, in 1957 and 1958 out of 14 adult deaths of which we could obtain the explanation, there were:

[784] --Four wisimã killed by Odun, including two women of over 85 who during their lifetime had never been the object of unfavorable notice;

[761] --One death by the action of a wisimã,

or a total of more than a third of the deaths; out of the nine others, two were looked upon as natural deaths (dead of old age), seven were attributed to the kunu.

754 The Refugee Blacks and Creole magic. Some of them go to
648 get from the lukumã what their own social morals forbid: vengeance or success acquired at the expense of other people. They have uttered an oath that prohibits the practice of wisi: for most of them it is clear that if they paid a piayeur /magician, sorcerer/ to harm someone, it would be the same as if they performed the sorcery themselves. But others make a mental reservation on this point.

754 In 1951, G..., of the Kotika lo, then about 20 years old,
755 felt ill while staying at Saint Laurent. He went to find a
648 Creole maïtif (clairvoyant) who presented him with a mirror, announcing to him that he was going to see in it the face of the one who had piayé /bewitched, cast a spell on/ him. G... saw nothing in the mirror. The maïtif was not upset at this and revealed to him that the piayeur must be someone in his wife's family. G... then recalled a dispute he had had some time previously with one of his wife's brothers and let himself be convinced: since that day he has not gotten along with his brother-in-law.